

## VII

### BOOK REVIEWS

BY-EFFECTS IN SALVARSAN THERAPY AND THEIR PREVENTION WITH  
SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE LIVER FUNCTION. BY V. Genner.  
1936.

THE treatment of syphilis has been revolutionised by the introduction of salvarsan and bismuth, which have almost ousted mercury and the iodides from the therapeutic field. Unfortunately in their train they have brought complexes almost unknown to the earlier syphilologists—such as erythema and exfoliative dermatitis, jaundice and acute yellow atrophy of the liver, and a host of relatively minor side effects, such as nitritoid crises, Herxheimer reactions, general malaise, dyspepsia, etc.

V. Genner has investigated these in Copenhagen, and reports his findings and opinions in a monograph entitled "By-effects in Salvarsan Therapy and their Prevention with Special Reference to the Liver Function." A study of this paper will convince anyone that dermatitis and jaundice are the direct result of the intensification of salvarsan therapy, though 914 appears to be less to blame than 606, which it has largely superseded in this country. With the decrease in the use of mercury albuminuria has almost disappeared, but bismuth has brought in its train a new complaint, viz., arthralgia. It is the prevention of these toxic effects which is of the greatest importance, and here Genner has not been able to contribute much to our knowledge; as regards their treatment he favours thiosulphate in dermatitis and glucose in jaundice; no mention is made of a fatty diet as a prophylactic measure.

It is not possible in a short review to go into details: suffice it to say that Genner has investigated a considerable number of cases with the greatest diligence and care—both out- and in-patients—and has reported his findings most fully. In addition he discusses the various theories of their causation, describes the tests he has used and indicates the best methods for their prevention.

If there is one point that emerges more clearly than another it is that the syphilologist must not allow himself to be frightened by the risk of toxic effects into reducing the intensity of his routine treatment; what he should do is to be on the watch for them, prevent them when he can, treat them when they occur, and modify his plan of campaign according to the idiosyncrasies of each particular case. In this connection it is interesting to note that dermatitis usually relapses if salvarsan is subsequently resumed, whereas this does not hold in the case of jaundice.

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